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ABSTRACT

A wide variety of low cost, innovative, and successful school improvement activities have been initiated at both state and local levels in the past few years. This document highlights many of the state-level activities by presenting the results of a 50-state survey conducted in May and June 1982. Two tables provide a brief overview, followed by short sections that describe the activities in each state. These diverse strategies share three general characteristics: (1) the school is the unit of educational improvement; (2) clear academic goals are focused on the basic skills, and the instructional program is directly related to those goals; and (3) student-level data are used for individual feedback to students and for modification of the instructional program. Frequently cited strategies include improving the capabilities of teachers and administrators; dissemination/adoption assistance; incorporation of the effective teaching and effective schools research into the substance of a state's improvement efforts; and provision of technical assistance from state education departments, usually through regional or intermediate service units. (Author/MLF)

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State Programs of School Improvement: A 50-State Survey

EA 015 221

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State Programs of School Improvement:

A 50-State Survey

Report No. 182-3

by Allan Odden and Van Dougherty

Education Improvement Center

Education Programs Division
Education Commission of the States

Robert C. Andringa, Executive Director

August 1982

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Foreword

As this booklet shows, states are creatively involved in a variety of school improvement activities, all designed to improve the quality of public elementary/secondary education in this country.

The information in this booklet draws upon a Rand Corporation report (McLaughlin, 1982) summarizing a survey conducted in the fall of 1981 of about two-thirds of the states. ECS updated the results and expanded the effort to include all 50 states. The ECS survey was conducted in May and June of 1982. Our interest was to gather as much information as could be gathered in a short time period about state efforts to improve the quality of the nation's schools. We believe we have uncovered many exciting, new and promising strategies, and we believe the results speak highly of the substantive state involvement in the nationwide efforts to improve schools.

While the results presented in this booklet are wide ranging, we know we were not able to identify all state activities related to education improvement. We apologize in advance for major omissions. ECS intends to continue tracking these state activities; future updates of this booklet will identify practices overlooked in this effort as well as new programs that will be initiated.

Allan Odden
Van Dougherty

August 1982

State Programs of School Improvement: An Overview

Improving education with constant or declining real resources is likely to be one of the major educational challenges of the 1980s. While this challenge might seem insurmountable to those trained in fiscal and programmatic reform through expansion, the fact is that a wide variety of low cost, innovative, exciting and successful school improvement activities already have been initiated at both state and local levels in the past few years. This document highlights many of the state-level activities, by presenting the results of an Education Commission of the States' 50-state survey conducted in May and June of 1982 (see Tables 1 and 2 for a brief overview).

Nearly all of the initiatives described in this document have been developed within the past five years, and thus represent new or invigorated approaches to school improvement. These recent state approaches to school improvement are characterized primarily by their diversity — in substance, breadth and style. They include:

1. An array of activities focused on improving the capabilities of the education work force, including new types of teacher and administrator certification and recertification, teacher proficiency examinations, and a spate of teacher and administrator professional development training programs that, in a number of states, include newly created administrative training academies or institutes.

2. A variety of new state-developed curricula or curricula guides, often focusing on the basic skills, but also covering many other academic proficiencies.

3. A range of new school accreditation standards, requirements for local district and individual school site planning and expanded state review of local instructional programs.

4. Numerous broad-based and comprehensive school improvement programs, sometimes specifically including an effective

schools program in which the characteristics of the most effective schools are identified and attempts made to replicate them in other school settings, but nearly always requiring a process of local planning covering needs assessment, redesign of the instructional program, monitoring individual student performance, and modification of plans based on evaluation data.

5. Many state-initiated dissemination and adoption assistance programs, local capacity building and problem solving initiatives, and a wide array of new technical assistance services, often provided through the new development or expansion of regional education units.

6. A variety of strategies related to the testing of students, including state-developed and administrated minimum competency tests, state development of test items that can be used by local districts in creating their own tests, and different requirements for the use of test results, ranging from a passing score for high school graduation to use of test results to modify the content of the instructional program.

7. New and enhanced parent involvement programs, as well as community information dissemination mandates in some states.

These new state activities are wide ranging in the substance of education strategies they address. The combination of strategies used, moreover, varies dramatically from state to state. Some states have adopted a comprehensive approach, initiating activities in all or nearly all of the above seven areas:

- California has mandated new types of teacher certification and required passing a teacher proficiency test; has developed a number of new curricula guides, mandates a local planning process and conducts reviews of the local district instructional program; has a five-year-old, broadly based school improvement program; has implemented a dissemination/adoption assistance program; mandates the administration of locally developed minimum competency testing; and has enhanced requirements for parent and community involvement. Leadership and initiative for these activities comes primarily from the state capitol.

- Colorado and Connecticut are two other states that also have taken a comprehensive approach to their school improvement efforts, but in these states the locus of initiative is in local

schools and local school districts, and the state acts more as a stimulator of action. While broad ranging, the dependence on local initiative tends to make the overall effort somewhat less integrated one.*

- Delaware, Maryland, Missouri and Pennsylvania are other states with comprehensive approaches to school improvement initiatives.

Other states have taken more targeted approaches to their school improvement efforts focusing on specific areas for attention. But even for these states, the specific areas addressed differ substantially:

- The school improvement strategy in Arizona, Nebraska, New Mexico, South Carolina and Wisconsin has focused almost entirely on testing — of both teachers and students.

- In Montana, South Dakota and Wyoming, resources are targeted on teacher and administrator professional development training.

- Iowa's and Illinois' strategy has been to provide a range of technical assistance services, including dissemination and adoption assistance, through regional intermediate education units.

- The Mississippi, Texas and Virginia efforts are focused on an accreditation approach.

Still other states have adopted strategies in between these two extremes, focusing their attention on more than one strategy but generally limiting activities to two or three initiatives, and sometimes to just particular areas of concern.

- Oklahoma, for example, has targeted most of its new initiatives on inputs to the educational process: raising teacher salaries, providing professional development training for both teachers and administrators, and developing new state curricula guides.

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*This comment should not be taken to indicate either that local school officials do not play an important role in school improvement efforts or that "top-down" programs are the best. Indeed, school improvement efforts will succeed only if they have the commitment and active involvement of local teachers, administrators and superintendents. Nevertheless, in strong local control states, leadership by state education policy makers is constrained by the spirit of localism and, statewide, the programs are somewhat less organized and integrated.

- Alaska plans to focus its activities on a collaborative effort of teacher and administrator inservice training, and a number of school improvement and effective schools strategies.

In summary, the diversity among the state approaches to school improvement is probably the only general conclusion that can be reached. The issues addressed vary widely, although nearly all issues are addressed in at least one state. The combination of issues differs widely and the priorities obviously are ranked differently. The diversity is fascinating and certainly reflects a richness produced by the federal system of public education in this country.

The roots of these state initiatives in school improvement policies are many, but three factors stand out:

- *Accountability pressures deriving from public perceptions of a decline in education quality.* One of the universal objectives across the states in the 1970s was to increase student performance, at least in the basic skills. To implement this objective, 38 states enacted a variety of minimum competency testing requirements. As the accountability issue matured, however, testing concerns often led to a variety of other concerns, including upgrading the educational work force, strengthening the instructional program, initiating school improvement efforts, and expanding community and parent involvement.

- *Secondary effects from years of debate and policy analysis related to school finance reform.* The school finance reform movement of the 1970s left many states with a dramatically greater and improved policy analysis capacity. The next logical question after the enacting of expensive school finance reforms was the payoff to the state in terms of better education quality. Policy initiatives related to education improvement often followed.

- *Increased sophistication from a decade-and-a-half of administering both federal and state categorical programs for special populations.* Program staff both in state education agencies and legislative research councils naturally progressed from the administrative and fiscal issues that surrounded the initial development of new education programs to issues of program quality that emerged as programs matured. These concerns, together with the knowledge made available by numerous evaluation studies, soon led to the raising of education quality issues as legitimate issues in and of themselves.

In short, a number of different factors seem to account for the surge of state school improvement initiatives, and state interest in improving the quality of local education practice is unlikely to wane. While state school improvement strategies are characterized by their diversity and while their roots come from different sources, three general characteristics of these diverse, specific strategies should be highlighted:

- *Focus on the school as the unit of education improvement.* In most states, especially those with new education planning requirements, the school rather than the classroom or school district has become the focal unit for the design and implementation of a school improvement program. Schools organize, administer and implement the instructional program; principals are the key to school effectiveness. This subdistrict focus of school improvement strategies has emerged in many states. Interestingly, it conforms to the implications from the effective schools and school improvement research (Cohen, 1982; Odden, 1982).

- *Requirements to set clear academic goals focused on the basic skills and to relate the instructional program directly to those goals.* Many state programs have reemphasized the importance of making achievement in the basic skills a priority, and maximizing success by requiring a match between the instructional program and these goals. This emphasis also is consistent with the effective teaching and effective schools research (Cohen, 1982).

- *Collection of student-level data that is tracked over a longitudinal time period, used for individual feedback to the student, and referenced for modification of the instructional program.* The important points here are that achievement data are student — not school or district — related and the data are tracked over time so progress can be followed. Again, this is an element that also has been identified in the effective teaching and effective schools research (Cohen, 1982).

While these three elements seem to cut across most of the state programs, there are a few other characteristics of these new state strategies that should be highlighted:

- *Concern with the capabilities of the education work force, and initiatives to improve both capacity and quality.* Some states focus mainly on teachers, since they provide instruction in the classrooms, and other states focus on administrators, since they run, organize and manage the education system. Some

states are concerned with both teachers and administrators. But the new initiatives reflect a widespread concern with teacher and administrator performance and have resulted in a set of activities covering professional staff development, and new inservice and preservice training programs.

- *Dissemination/adoption assistance, which in some cases includes specific attempts to identify and disseminate effective schools characteristics.* This is probably a somewhat underutilized strategy, even though local school people constantly express a need for practical and effective programs and materials. A good dissemination program, even though a low cost item, has substantial unrealized potential in many states.

- *Incorporation of the effective teaching and effective schools research into the substance of a state's school improvement efforts.* A number of states, including Alaska, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Maryland, Michigan, Missouri and Pennsylvania have incorporated the results from this rich research base into their education improvement policies and programs. But the potential of this resource has not been tapped fully. Yet, this research provides validated and replicated techniques that are successful in increasing student performance in the basic skills, including students and schools in poverty and ethnically mixed neighborhoods (Cohen, 1982). In addition, it provides a research-based content, including a series of well-developed training manuals, for pre- and inservice training programs. This major asset from a decade-and-a-half of research provides a set of tools and strategies that could substantially enhance the school improvement efforts in many states.

- *Provision of technical assistance from state education departments through a decentralized structure, usually regional or intermediate service units.* This attempt to bring the state education department closer to local school districts is a rapidly growing strategy. Although the specifics of the new structures vary by state, some providing services free of charge, others offering services for fees, some providing a broad array of service and others a narrow array, the tendency is to decentralize the function of the technical assistance unit of state education departments through regional service centers. Indeed, in many states, state department personnel work directly with staffs in individual schools.

- *Focus of attention on elementary schools.* While the activities being initiated are exciting and have potential payoffs in terms

of increased student performance at least in the basic skills, there is considerable room for education improvement initiatives focused directly on secondary schools. Given the need for improved student performance in the higher order skills, the need for increased preparation in math and science for participation in the increasingly computer- and technologically-oriented society, and the rising public pressures for a stronger and more formal core curricula, education reform at the high school level should increase as the 1980s progress. Secondary school improvement, except for a few exceptions, has not been the target of state school improvement initiatives; this is likely to change quickly in the next few years.

All state education improvement efforts are in some jeopardy, however, in light of the cuts in federal aid and the fiscal straits in which most states find themselves today. Indeed, many of the state education improvement programs grew out of creative uses of administrative set-aside funds from many of the state and federal categorical program dollars. All of these pots of dollars either have been eliminated or significantly reduced. Since revenues also are down in most states, the ability to replace these lost federal dollars with state funds is not great, and few predict the state fiscal squeeze will be alleviated in the short term. Thus, while many of the state initiatives in school improvement have been relatively low cost efforts, they nevertheless are experiencing some uncertainty since the overall funding for education is uncertain at this time.

Nevertheless, the information uncovered in this 50-state survey shows that the states indeed are "off and running" with many creative, fascinating and exciting school improvement activities. Many different approaches are being tried. Many different strategies are being tested. The actions clearly are a positive reflection on the manner in which states are exerting leadership in education policy, as well as a reflection of the seriousness with which state education and political leaders take the quality of the nation's public school system. Indeed, these state responses to education improvement indicate that states are much more involved in education policy than at just the finance, governance and legal levels. States want the education system in this country to be top quality and effective, and they are putting their fiscal resources, human capital and creative talents behind their efforts in order to raise the schools to the levels of quality expected by parents and taxpayers.

Tables

Table 1

School Improvement Activities in the States

State	Teacher Recertification	New Types of Teacher Certification	Teacher Proficiency/Competency Exam	Teacher Inservice	Administration Training	New Administration Training Academies	Curriculum Developmental Efforts	Local New Accreditation Standards	School Planning Requirement	Local Instruction Program Review
Alabama	AL		AL	AL	AL	AL				AL
Alaska				AK	AK					
Arizona		AZ	AZ	AZ			AZ			AZ
Arkansas		AR	AR	AR	AR	AR	AR			AR
California		CA	CA	CA			CA		CA	CA
Colorado			CO					CO	CO	CO
Connecticut	CT	CT	CT	CT						
Delaware				DE	DE	DE	DE		DE	
Florida	FL	FL	FL	FL			FL		FL	FL
Georgia		GA	GA	GA						GA
Hawaii			HI	HI		HI				
Idaho				ID	ID	ID		ID	ID	
Illinois										
Indiana		IN								
Iowa										
Kansas							KS			
Kentucky				KY	KY			KY	KY	
Louisiana	LA	LA		LA			LA			
Maine				ME	ME	ME	ME			
Maryland							MD		MD	MD
Massachusetts		MA		MA	MA		MA		MA	

Michigan				MI	MI	MI	MI		MI	MI
Minnesota							MN		MN	MN
Mississippi			MS	MS				MS	MS	
Missouri								MO	MO	
Montana				MT	MT		MT			
Nebraska							NE			
Nevada				NV	NV					
New Hampshire								NH		
New Jersey	NJ							NJ	NJ	NJ
New Mexico	NM		NM							NM
New York								NY	NY	NY
North Carolina	NC				NC	NC				
North Dakota				ND				ND		
Oklahoma		OK	OK	OK	OK		OK			
Oregon							OR		OR	OR
Pennsylvania	PA			PA	PA	PA	PA	PA	PA	PA
Rhode Island							RI		RI	
South Carolina		SC	SC		SC	SC				
South Dakota				SD	SD		SD		SD	
Tennessee			TN	TN			TN		TN	
Texas		TX	TX					TX	TX	
Utah					UT		UT			
Vermont		VT		VT	VT		VT	VT		
Virginia								VA		VA
Washington									WA	WA
West Virginia			WV	WV			WV	WV	WV	WV
Wisconsin										
Wyoming				WY	WY					

Source: *State Programs of School Improvement: A 50-State Survey*, Denver: Education Commission of the States, 1982.

Table 2

School Improvement Activities in the States

State	School Improvement Programs	Effective Schools Projects	Dissemination/ Adoption Assistance	Technical Assistance Through Intermediate Units	Local District/ School Capacity Building or Problem-Solving Programs	Student Competency Tests	Parent Involvement Programs/ Requirements	Community Information Dissemination Programs
Alabama	AL		AL	AL	AL	AL		
Alaska	AK	AK	AK		AK	AK		
Arizona						AZ	AZ	
Arkansas	AR		AR		AR	AR	AR	AR
California	CA		CA			CA	CA	CA
Colorado	CO	CO	CO		CO	CO		
Connecticut	CT		CT	CT	CT			
Delaware	DE	DE	DE		DE	DE		
Florida	FL					FL	FL	FL
Georgia	GA		GA	GA		GA		
Hawaii			HI				HI	HI
Idaho	ID					ID		
Illinois			IL	IL				
Indiana								
Iowa			IA	IA				
Kansas			KS			KS		
Kentucky	KY					KY	KY	
Louisiana						LA		
Maine			ME					ME
Maryland	MD		MD	MD	MD	MD		MD
Massachusetts	MA	MA	MA	MA	MA	MA	MA	MA

Michigan	MI	MI	MI	MI	MI	MI	MI
Minnesota	MN		MN	MN	MN	MN	MN
Mississippi							
Missouri	MO		MO		MO		
Montana			MT				
Nebraska			NE		NE		
Nevada					NV		
New Hampshire					NH		
New Jersey				NJ	NJ		
New Mexico					NM		
New York			NY	NY	NY		
North Carolina				NC	NC		
North Dakota	ND		ND			ND	ND
Ohio							
Oklahoma							
Oregon					OR		
Pennsylvania	PA	PA	PA	PA	PA		PA
Rhode Island	RI		RI		RI		
South Carolina					SC	SC	
South Dakota	SD	SD		SD			
Tennessee	TN		TN	TN	TN	TN	
Texas		TX		TX	TX		
Utah			UT		UT	UT	UT
Vermont	VT		VT		VT		
Virginia					VA		
Washington					WA	WA	
West Virginia	WV		WV				
Wisconsin					WI		
Wyoming							

Source: *State Programs of School Improvement: A 50-State Survey*, Denver: Education Commission of the States, 1982.

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State Reports

Alabama

Alabama's approach to education is one that emphasizes local control of the education process with the state department of education providing financial and technical support to the 128 local school systems. This technical support comes in the form of a statewide student testing program (utilizing both a standardized achievement test and a basic competency test), a concentrated effort in improving basic skills, assistance in all curricular areas and with federal program implementation, a program for staff development, and an administrator's training program.

The state's basic skills program is based on the results of the annual statewide student assessment program. The norm-referenced achievement test is administered to all students in grades 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10 and 11. A state-developed minimum competency exam is given to all students in grades 3, 6 and 9 and measures student progress in the areas of reading, language and mathematics. Beginning in the 1983-84 school year, a high school graduation exam will be given to 11th graders. Using the results of the norm-referenced achievement tests and the minimum competency exams, personnel of the state department of education work with the local school systems and with individual schools to diagnose strengths and weaknesses of the system/school, to help adjust or develop curricula programs, and to help teachers assess their instructional practices.

Applicants for teaching and instructional support personnel certificates are required to take state-developed criterion-referenced tests in professional specialization content areas. New types of teacher certification have been implemented, focusing on increased study in the specialization content areas. New standards also have been developed for the recertification of teachers. Once personnel are properly certified and employed, local school systems are required by state board of education mandate to provide professional development activities for staff members and must have approved staff development plans on file. The state department of education also offers a leadership training program for present and potential school administrators. Twenty-four different modules are available for workshop presentation that

focus on improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the leadership and management team in the school systems. Participation in the program satisfies part of the professional development requirements for the administrator certificate.

The technical assistance and professional development activities given to school systems are provided through the staff of the state department of education and/or through personnel at the local level who have expertise in specific areas. Information about exemplary programs both in Alabama and in the nation also is made available to the local school districts.

Alaska

The Alaska Effective Schooling Program is a developing statewide effort to provide students better opportunities for learning. In 1980, the governor asked the state board of education to design a plan to help local districts improve local education programs. The planning resulted in the creation of the Governor's Task Force on Effective Schooling and, in 1981, the task force reported their findings, many of which are beginning to be implemented. First, school boards and administrators will determine local needs and review effective practices; then, district teams of central office personnel, principals and teachers will be trained in skills needed to provide leadership. In 1982, teams from volunteer districts are being trained. They will pilot test their plans for one year, then other teams will be trained to carry out improvement efforts across the state. These efforts will include locally determined output measures. Schools will be able to use any test, locally developed or others, to assess student progress. The state department of education will develop and provide training for these leadership teams as well as provide ongoing technical assistance to the schools. A major review of the school finance structure also was begun in 1982.

Arizona

Arizona's school improvement efforts focus on compliance reviews, essential skills and testing for students, and performance-based teacher certification. The department of education has developed a handbook for districts to use for instructional program reviews and to assess compliance with mandated standards. The department will assist districts with their assessments and will provide training to school personnel to bring the programs into compliance with the standards. The department of education

also has developed a list of essential skills in communication, computation and citizenship for grades K-12. A list of teaching activities that leads toward mastery of the identified skills has been developed for teacher use. In addition, a parental participation booklet has been developed, using the same approach, that parents can use to teach the skills to their children. Arizona also mandated three testing programs for students. The first is a norm-referenced test for each student that has to be given every year. The results are used as a "quality checkpoint" to assess basic skills progress. Second is the Continuous Uniform Evaluation System test that assesses mastery of basic skills. Both of these tests are locally developed. Third, local districts develop and administer a competency test in grammar, reading and mathematics for graduation in grades 8 and 12. Students must show at least 6th grade proficiency for graduation from grade 8 and at least 9th grade proficiency for graduation from high school.

Applicants for basic teaching certificates are required to participate in a three-phase initial certification program. They must pass both a state-developed test in reading, grammar and mathematics, and a professional knowledge test. Finally, first-year teachers must participate in a residency program of at least one year, but not more than two years, in which teachers will be supervised and observed by master teachers. They must demonstrate proficiency in 14 specific skill areas before receiving a teaching certificate.

Arkansas

The voluntary Arkansas Program for Effective Teaching (PET) has been implemented in 215 of the 370 school districts in the state. Initiated in 1979, it is a research-based inservice training program. The state education agency began with workshops in the instructional delivery program, then certified trainers (mainly principals) to become instructors for other districts wishing to implement the program. Using current effective schools and teaching research, this program addresses management, human relations and planning skills, selection and use of materials, content knowledge, and instruction skills. Currently, the department is field testing a classroom management model designed in part to increase time available for classroom instruction. According to one state department official, test scores are up because of this emphasis on improved instructional delivery.

Criterion-referenced tests developed specifically to measure reading and mathematics performance, as outlined in a booklet describing statewide education goals, are used to test all students

in grades 3, 6 and 8. In addition, norm-referenced tests in reading, mathematics and language arts are given to all students in selected grades each year.

In 1981, the department of education established the Arkansas Executive Academy for School Administrators. Seminars are offered on topics such as methods of establishing goals and objectives, program planning and implementation, effective discipline, time management and communication.

California

AB 65, signed in 1977, the California response to a Supreme Court mandate to reform its school finance system, was the starting point for California's statewide School Improvement Program. Almost one-half of the state's public schools currently participate in the program, a planning process that focuses on individual students and involves every aspect of school operations. The planning begins at the school site level involving parents, teachers, principals, community members and, at the secondary level, students. Representatives from these groups form the School Site Council. The program is funded by the state and the council determines how the money will be spent. The state sets the general framework for the program and the local school districts develop a three-year District Master Plan that is based on an assessment of the school's capability to meet the education needs of each student. The district plan must specify improvement objectives and indicate ways to achieve the objectives, including intended outcomes. If accepted, the district receives approximately $58-133 per student. An important part of the program is the review process. Schools participating in the program are expected to conduct regular self assessments, in addition to periodic external reviews conducted by the state department of education or by a consortium of school districts. The department of education has developed a program review instrument and provides annual training for program reviewers.

California students also participate in several locally-developed competency testing programs: 1) for high school graduation, 2) elementary grades testing for grade promotion and remediation and 3) early-exit test. Teachers applying for initial certification are required to take a state-developed or state-adopted basic skills test. Additionally, instructional aides must pass the minimum competency test for high school students.

Colorado

School accreditation requirements and the Educational Accountability Act work together to form the basis of the state's school improvement program. In 1980, new legislation confirmed the state board of education's authority to accredit school districts and required all districts to comply with the state's 1971 accountability law as one condition of accreditation. The accountability law requires all districts to develop a continuing five-year plan based on local priorities for education improvement programs.

In addition, each individual school is asked to develop a multiyear school improvement plan. This plan is to be related to the district priorities and to individual school priorities as defined through needs and strengths assessments.

As an aid to individual schools involved in this process, the state department of education has developed a self-assessment instrument called "Indicators of Quality Schools," which schools can use to identify strengths and weaknesses of programs, and governance processes. The instrument measures three major categories related to quality: 1) student outcomes: achievement and satisfaction in learning, 2) leadership: instructional and institutional characteristics and 3) the accountability-accreditation planning process. Each of the 12 indicators of quality is related to one of the three categories — all indicators are related to research on effective teaching and effective schools.

Through the accountability process, districts have identified a variety of school improvement priorities. The two priorities most frequently identified are basic skills improvement and school climate (motivation, student attitudes, discipline). Two school improvement programs have been designed to provide technical assistance to districts and individual schools that have identified these two priorities. Services are provided to these schools and districts to assist them in using systematic school improvement processes to accomplish their objectives.

During 1981-82, the department piloted a delivery system for providing services to geographical "clusters" of schools. Cluster membership was available to any school desiring to apply the accountability process to improving basic skills instruction or school climate. In addition, two existing leagues of IGE (Individually Guided Education) schools that had operated for several years were integrated into the cluster network. These leagues and clusters will be continued in 1982-83.

To further facilitate school improvement services, the department is now organizing four regional field service teams. Each team consists of a coordinator and specialist in basic skills improvement, special education and accountability/accreditation.

Connecticut

Connecticut is promoting a broad array of efforts directed at local education quality, such as curriculum guides, statewide proficiency exams for 9th graders, teacher development and school effectiveness projects that rely on local initiative for success. The Connecticut School Effectiveness Project is a voluntary school site approach using a facilitator from either the state education agency or regional education service centers. The facilitators help local districts develop action plans for improving student achievement, using student assessment data and current knowledge from effective teaching research. In each school, the entire faculty is involved. They decide whether or not to participate in the project and, if they do, they help develop the action plan. Resource persons help implement various plan components. As schools develop their own problem-solving and capacity-building abilities, the role of the facilitator diminishes. The goal is to produce improved student achievement by the end of the second year of action. All of these activities began immediately after the school finance reforms between 1975 and 1977.

Delaware

Delaware has another set of comprehensive school improvement strategies. In 1972, the state board of education established statewide student goals for education and a standardized testing program for measuring student progress toward those goals called the Delaware Educational Accountability System. In 1977, the department of public instruction published case studies on high- and low-achieving schools, focusing on factors that affected student outcomes. The department adopted a set of standards for K-12 schools and, in 1979, the state board of education adopted the Goal-Directed and Performance-Based Instruction plan that brought minimum performance requirements and school standards together into an integrated school improvement program. The Delaware Educational Accountability System is focused on student achievement, needs assessment and program improvement. The Goal-Directed and Performance-Based Instruction plan is "a design for the management of learning in which agreed upon expectancies become the framework for the educational pro-

gram." The accountability system provides annual data on student achievement — districts must submit plans for improvement each year. Five-year plans for improvement are required through the instruction plan. Both programs have been fully implemented and now include more planning and technical assistance by the department of public instruction in terms of analyzing data to help districts with their school improvement efforts. The department also has developed a set of materials related to school climate and classroom management. Extensive inservice courses are offered by the state to teachers and, in 1981, the Management Institute began to provide administrator training in effective management of time and resources. As of June 1981, Delaware high school students had to demonstrate mastery in 17 specific basic skills in reading, composition and mathematics, in addition to the satisfactory completion of required courses necessary to earn a high school diploma. Promotion policies based on achievement in the basic skills were implemented on a K-12 basis beginning in September 1979.

Florida

In Florida, gubernatorial and legislative interest in education has launched a variety of statewide school improvement efforts. In the mid-1970s, accountability legislation, in part a natural outgrowth of the 1973 school finance reform, mandated student competency testing in the basic skills and a functional literacy test required for graduation. The testing and assessment information is coordinated with state and local planning, curriculum development and technical assistance, with the state department of education taking an active role in providing needed support for these activities. The department conducts program audits and publishes the results in the media, hoping that such publicity will direct more attention to local quality issues. Basic skills competency testing for teachers also is required for an initial teaching certificate, with specific inservice education requirements mandated every five years for certification renewal. School advisory committees, also an outgrowth of the 1973 school finance bill, provide for citizen involvement and participation in education issues at the local level. The state education agency funds a state coordinator for the citizens who serve on these committees.

A Florida Academy for School Learners has been created for the professional development training of principals covering areas from evaluation, to resource allocation, to community relations.

Georgia

The Educational Improvement Program developed in Georgia is based on systematic planning at the local level where locally assessed needs are prioritized, alternatives to address priority needs are analyzed, and logically made decisions are implemented. Critical examination of existing programs often reveal marginal, ineffective or counter-productive activities that can be terminated and those resources redirected to support more productive programs. When the redirection of state and local resources is inadequate to initiate some new and more strongly validated practice, the system has had the option of applying for Adaption/ Adaptation Funds from ESEA, Title IV, Part C (prior to 1976, ESEA, Title III). Every local system in Georgia has been funded at least once and over 90 percent have been funded each of the four times they were eligible.

A network of 14 Georgia Training Centers for Educational Improvement has been established to help local school systems adopt/adapt school improvement programs from around the state that meet the specific needs of local schools. The centers are funded to provide development, follow-up and evaluation services in content areas such as basic skills, staff development, curriculum development and administrative training. The state department of education supports the centers in the organization, management and delivery of training. Georgia also has a testing and accountability program. The Essential Skills Program and Accountability Plan requires mandatory student competency testing in grades 4, 8 and 10 in reading and mathematics; by 1984, students will need to pass the 10th grade test in order to receive a high school diploma. By 1987, all school districts must develop local indicators for their curriculum design and testing program. The state provides technical assistance and grants to local districts to help develop the local indicators. Initial certification of teachers is based on graduation from an approved teacher education program, passing a state-designed criterion-referenced teacher competency test and on-the-job assessment of performance.

Hawaii

Basic skills instruction in the elementary grades has been strengthened through a statewide campaign, "Parents as Partners in Reading," to draw parents into school reading programs; new approaches to early childhood education; and use of the effective schools and teaching research to identify programs, practices and strategies in improving basic skills learning. New requirements for

high school graduation have also been added — additional credits in science and mathematics, and mastery of 15 competencies. A broader curriculum improvement effort reflecting a competency-based education approach for needing minimum competencies is near completion on the Hawaii State Test of Essential Competencies. Since 1976, an Educational Management Training Program (EMTP) has been used to screen and train prospective public school administrators in the state. This program consists of highly selective screening, intensive seminars, on-site internship, and selected management and school administration courses. Since 1978, school administrators have been required to meet individually with their teachers twice a year to identify strengths and weaknesses and to plan a course of teacher performance improvement. Extended observation of teachers in action and follow-up conferences are a major part of this teacher improvement program (Project for Assessing Teaching in Hawaii). Schools also are required to establish a school-community council with representatives from staff, parents, students and community. The council meets each quarter to advise the principal on matters of school policy and programs and provides a forum for discussing the school's accomplishments and problems with the board of education, the district school advisory council and the community.

Idaho

Idaho's school improvement strategy hinges on school accreditation requirements and administrator-teacher inservice training, both designed to help in the development of school/district improvement plans. Elementary schools are required to implement a self study every five years as part of the accreditation procedure. Secondary schools are required to conduct such a study every 10 years and submit to an on-site review team evaluation. Idaho also has developed a statewide administrator renewal program. School administrators form groups, called collegial teams, that are committed to provide support to each other in the development and implementation of school improvement programs. These team members develop personal and professional goals and plans that are shared with members of the team. When problems are shared and feedback provided, administrators participating in this process have reported success in taking their ideas back to their schools and providing stronger leadership to the school, staff and district.

Proficiency testing in grades 9-12 in reading, writing, arithmetic and spelling can be used at the option of local districts.

Illinois

In Illinois the school improvement strategy is based on 1) the use of regional state education agency staff who provide technical assistance to local districts and 2) a networking and information-brokering role. The state education agency developed the Illinois Problems Index designed to be used for local needs assessment. Regional staff have been trained to help local districts develop an assessment plan and education program responses to it. The state board of education maintains a resource and dissemination network with a data base of resources such as consultants, curriculum specialists and effective programs that the regional teams and schools can access to respond to local district needs.

Indiana

Indiana has implemented a number of small initiatives related to school improvement. New teacher certification regulations require that teachers take courses in contemporary issues and problems, and in reading education. A pilot student competency testing program was initiated in 1981. An essential skills assessment program will be developed to measure 10th-grade reading and spelling skills. The state education agency conducts workshops for parents, designed to teach them skills to help their children's reading skill development.

Iowa

In 1975, the Iowa Legislature created the Area Education Agencies to serve local school districts' education needs. This assistance includes inservice education, consulting, special programs to encourage specific instruction, and identifying, analyzing and sharing improved education methods. The agencies do not serve in a supervisory or administrative position but function as a liaison between local districts and the department of public instruction. Other than these regional service units, there is no specific school improvement effort as such.

Kansas

The Kansas approach is two-pronged: a testing program in the basic skills and an information dissemination/technical assistance program. Kansas students are tested in grades 2, 4, 6, 8 and 11 in reading and mathematics skills. The information is used to provide

a local district profile of students' achievement in these skills, and their relationship to a state-required minimum level of achievement. The Kansas Educational Dissemination-Diffusion System has made staff and money available to local districts that wish to bring about change in their school system. Technical assistance to develop local skills, clarifying education needs, choosing already-developed programs, implementing change and organization development has been funded through the National Institute of Education, Title III and IV-C, the Women's Educational Equity Act and the National Diffusion Network.

Kentucky

Kentucky's elected state school superintendent is providing leadership in school improvement. The total program includes revised accreditation standards, development of local school improvement plans that include assessing student performance in the basic skills, and a school climate program. The state education agency piloted a new accreditation system during the 1981-82 school year in an effort to ensure that local district's education programs were in compliance with state board standards. Compliance indicators that show whether a district is meeting what is required have been developed for each standard. Standards addressed include: statement of philosophy and objectives, program of school/community relations, staff development and student assessment. The state education agency offers technical assistance to aid local districts in complying with these standards. HB 579, the Education Improvement Act, requires local districts to develop an education improvement plan that measures student progress in the basic skills in grades 3, 5, 7 and 10. The state again will, upon request, provide technical assistance to districts to help them develop such a plan. Kentucky also is piloting a school climate improvement process, patterned after the Colorado program, in several schools.

In addition, Kentucky is in the process of developing competency-based teacher education programs, and has passed legislation allocating funds to strengthen the recruitment for math and science teachers, including a loan program for college training in these fields.

Louisiana

Louisiana's school improvement initiatives are concentrated in two major programs: a competency-based education program for

students and the Professional Improvement Program for teachers. Act 750, the Competency-Based Education Program enacted in 1979, established statewide curriculum standards for reading, writing and mathematics. In addition, the Act mandates a student assessment of those required subjects in grades 2-12. The testing program began in grade 2 in the 1981-82 school year and will add a grade each year until grade 12 is reached. Further, the Act requires each school district to develop a pupil progression plan based upon student performance on the assessment program. Emphasis is placed on the student's mastery of the basic skills and will be used as the principal criteria for promotion or placement. In 1980, the Louisiana Educational Employees Professional Improvement Program was enacted to encourage teachers to continue their studies and to remain in the teaching profession. The legislature funded $69 million to support this voluntary program that provides salary enhancements based on individually-planned professional development programs that include academic and inservice activities. Teachers must submit a five-year plan of professional development to receive the salary increases and all plans and activities must be approved by a local committee of teachers. Academic activities may include relevant formal college courses, preparing and conducting approved workshops and seminars, supervising student teachers, or developing and implementing innovative and exemplary programs. Inservice activities can include attendance at approved conferences, workshops and seminars; continuing education courses; tutoring; or serving on education development task forces.

Maine

An accreditation program encourages local districts to meet certain state-specified criteria for academic excellence for high school students. Maine's activities related specifically to school improvement include: a staff development program in which the state provides technical assistance teams to consult with districts in establishing staff development programs such as how to set up a management structure, needs assessment, problem solving, providing available resource contacts, designing new programs and evaluation.

Maryland

In Maryland, school improvement efforts are coordinated under the program, Project Basic. Begun originally as a project to emphasize high school graduation prerequisites, the program has

now begun to focus on instruction, assessment and delivery throughout the education system. The 1980-81 school year was the first year of statewide implementation. The project focuses on six areas: goals, content focus, assessment, local involvement, support system and local action. The department of education provides assistance to help schools and districts attain their goals by assigning full-time, locally-based facilitators to work with the districts in the implementation of the project and to serve as an important liaison between local concerns and the department of education. Maryland requires the local school system to develop and implement a plan that follows the Project Basic model. Requirements include: 1) a match between statewide required competencies and the local instruction program, 2) administration of a testing program and maintenance of student achievement test results and 3) a remediation program for failing students. In order to provide appropriate instruction to ensure student achievement in competencies required by the state, the School Improvement Through Instructional Process activities began in 1980. By focusing on needs identified through Project Basic, local districts may implement one of four models in the process: mastery learning, active teaching, student team teaching or teaching variables. The state department of education provides in-depth training, technical assistance and funds through grants to local districts wishing to develop and implement plans in these areas. To graduate from high school, students are required to pass a criterion-referenced reading test. Tests on writing, math, work, citizenship and survival skills will follow.

In addition, a statewide Commission on Quality Teaching has just issued a report that recommends a series of efforts, including efforts to recruit and retain more able persons in the teaching profession and to upgrade teacher preservice and inservice training. Its draft recommendations include certification exams, higher teacher training admission and exit standards, and new statewide teacher evaluation systems. The state funds 12 executive academies providing training in general management through summer workshops, with follow-up technical assistance provided during the school year.

The state has initiated a statewide high school study commission that will prepare a mission statement for high school education, new and more stringent graduation requirements, curriculum guidelines and other initiatives affecting all facets of secondary education. The state has initiated and largely funded 58 pre-kindergarten programs that constitute almost one-half of the elementary schools in the state in which the reading level at the 3rd grade has been a continuing problem. Finally, by the end of

1982, all school systems in Maryland will have a board of education-adopted guidance and counseling policy and program consistent with the plan, and standards developed by the state board of education in 1979.

Massachusetts

A basic skills program that began in 1981 serves as the anchor of the Massachusetts school improvement activities. The focus of the program is on local curriculum adjustment and centers on modifying or changing existing instructional program activities, not creating new programs. The mandate permits flexibility and allows local determination of standards. School districts are required to set minimum standards of student achievement, to assess student performance and to provide remediation. The state department of education helps districts develop and administer tests, and to modify curriculum in response to test score results. In addition, the Commonwealth Inservice Institute for teachers, begun in 1978, is funded with state, private and federal funds to support requests for inservice education projects. These grants may be given to teachers, administrators or parents to develop a school improvement program, hire consultants and specialists, or to develop a response to a particular need. The focus is on problem solving. The initial assistance from the institute, whether in the form of dollars or technical assistance, provides a starting point for participants to develop their own problem-solving capabilities and responses to their specific needs.

Michigan

School improvement in Michigan began in 1970 with the development of a state assessment program that provided basic skills achievement information to parents, teachers and students. The Michigan Educational Assessment Program is a statewide testing program in reading and mathematics, and tests are administered every fall to all 4th-, 7th- and 10th-grade students. The test results provided by the program allow local educators to identify which students have acquired basic skills and to assess the strengths and weaknesses of their basic skills program. Information from nearly a decade of use of these assessments has been used by education specialists in the state to review and revise the tests. In 1980-81, the revised tests were implemented statewide and will be used as a continuing method for local district assessment of their basic skills program. State-designed curriculum standards also have been developed and can be used as a model by local districts in

developing their basic skills program. These standards have been constructed to allow for the wide variation in local practices.

In 1980, a collaboration between the state university and local school districts was begun to implement the knowledge from the effective teaching and effective schools research. In 1973, the Michigan Department of Education funded a major two-year study of compensatory education reading programs in an effort to identify effective education practices for teaching reading, including the costs associated with those practices. In addition, the goal was to design a method of evaluation that was valid in identifying such effective practices. The study was funded by the legislature in sample school districts, half of which were high achieving and half, low achieving.

The department of education, together with Detroit Public Schools, the Institute for Research on Teaching at Michigan State University and the Wayne County Intermediate School District, is now in its second year of a pilot project that involves six schools in Detroit. These institutions are focusing on effective schools research and building-level planning and planning teams that address locally-identified needs.

The governor and the department also initiated a new state-supported teacher inservice training program in 1979. The department created an outreach project in 1980 focused on helping district staff communicate more effectively with the community on school issues. Finally, a new administrator training academy has been created.

Minnesota

State efforts for school improvement rely on two major integrated programs: Some Essential Learner Outcomes (SELOs) and Planning, Evaluation and Reporting (PER) legislation. SELOs, with a focus on basic skills, grew out of the statewide assessment program. Since Minnesota does not mandate curriculum, SELOs are intended to help local districts develop their own instruction programs. This curriculum guide also enables teachers to analyze their teaching effectiveness through locally-administered tests or through the Minnesota Assessment Program, a series of subject matter tests patterned after those of the National Assessment of Educational Progress. The PER legislation requires districts to develop an instruction plan that includes measurable learner outcomes and to report to the public, annually, their local board policy regarding planning and evaluation; curriculum goals;

summary test results; opinions of students, parents and other residents; and a school improvement plan for the next year. It is intended to improve school-community relations, keep the public better informed, and help people decide which programs and services schools can and should provide. By combining the two programs, school districts are able to develop a process for curriculum planning and evaluation that addresses their specific needs. Under the provisions of the law, the state department is required to provide, either through the department or the nine cooperative educational service units, technical assistance to districts for instruction plans and assessments. A council on quality education awards grants that are funded by the legislature to some schools for special improvement programs.

Mississippi

In 1975, the Mississippi Legislature passed legislation that required the state department of education to design an accountability program. The program is based on local school district planning. The Accountability and Instructional Management program requires that each school district have a management plan by 1984. The management plan must define the content of the instructional program, attach objectives that include learner outputs, identify teaching practices to be used, outline a method of evaluation or measurement and an inservice training program. State education department staff conduct workshops and offer inservice activities for local school district personnel to help them comply with the mandate. District accreditation is contingent upon compliance with the mandate.

Mississippi also has revised its teacher certification standards and, by July 1983, will require a certain score on ACT or SAT tests for admission to a teacher training program.

Missouri

Missouri's school improvement initiatives include a state testing program that provides individual student achievement profiles, a new instructional management program designed to imbed effective teaching knowledge into all Missouri schools and rigorous school accreditation standards. The testing program is two-fold. First, criterion-referenced tests in reading and mathematics are given in grades 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 and are used as an instructional guide and aid in identifying students who may be having difficulties in mastering skills. In addition, teachers are required to

keep individual student achievement profiles throughout the student's academic year. Second, the state board mandates the Basic Essential Skills Test, a competency test for all 8th-grade students in mathematics, reading, language arts and government/economics. The state education agency provides the test, grades and records the results, and develops a complete test profile for all students. The competency testing program began in 1979, two years after Missouri's 1977 school finance reform. The instructional management system, a way of organizing instruction and managing learning experiences, began in 1979 as a major research-based effort to bring effective teaching research and methods to all schools in the state. At the present time it is a voluntary effort, but Missouri education officials are hoping it will be utilized by all school systems in the state in the near future. The department of education provides curriculum specialists to work with districts that are implementing the system. Finally, each school in the state is evaluated annually as part of the accreditation process. Schools are rated on three levels, according to the overall quality of the education program, and the ratings are published by the state department of education. A guideline of approved standards is provided by the state for each level and technical assistance is available to help schools meet those standards.

Montana

The department of public instruction has conducted a statewide needs assessment to establish which districts need assistance and in what areas. This assessment is the beginning of a long-range effort to develop a curriculum plan designed for improving basic skills instruction in the state. The assessment also helps establish teacher inservice needs, and the department is currently focusing on inservice activities. A calendar of school-related activities is currently in place that contains information on all education activities across the state. A resource bank is currently being developed to provide teachers with a list of people who can provide workshops, curriculum assistance or other inservice needs. The legislature has granted seven pupil instruction-related inservice days to teachers. These days are state-funded and can be spent in various ways with some restrictions as to how many days can be spent in each activity. Districts can use these days for parent/teacher conferences, planning for the school year, workshops and staff development. In the fall of 1982 the first administrator workshop will be held to address curriculum development for the local schools.

Nebraska

The department of education has developed a student assessment program, Nebraska Assessment Battery of Essential Learning Skills, which school districts may use, or districts may devise their own assessment program. The tests are essential skills tests in reading, writing, spelling, mathematics and map reading. The state will provide assistance, upon request, to districts wishing to implement the tests. The Nebraska approval and accreditation standards require an assessment program in the essential skills. Just recently, the state created a commission on education quality that is charged with reexamining the goals of the entire education system. The commission will focus specific attention on education and technology, teacher education generally and math and science teachers specifically, and vocational education.

Nevada

The Nevada school improvement program efforts include inservice training programs for teachers and administrators, and student minimum competency training. An inservice program focuses on basic skills instruction. Workshops are provided by the state education agency in curriculum areas and in classroom management. A Principalship Improvement Project, funded with state, Far West Laboratory and local district money, conducts workshops focused on instructional management skills for principals. The state's student competency testing began by legislative mandate in 1977 and tests students in grades 3, 6, 9 and in grade 12 for graduation. The tests cover the subjects of reading, writing and mathematics. The tests are constructed to allow local districts to use the results to modify curriculum and to provide remedial instruction.

New Hampshire

In 1978, the department of education initiated the accountability plan to be used as a guideline to provide local school boards with a consistent link between education outcomes and planning. To comply with the accountability requirements, districts have to complete a six-step process: 1) develop essential student outcomes for both state-mandated and locally-designed fields of learning, 2) develop performance indicators for all essential outcomes, 3) design and carry out sound assessment procedures, 4) analyze assessment data, 5) report assessment results to the department of education and 6) develop a management plan based

on assessment results. Competency testing in grades 4, 8 and 12 in communications and mathematics serves as a guideline for developing accountability plans.

To help districts carry out these procedures, the commissioner of education established an accountability unit within the department to assist local districts. The commissioner also created a joint management council, consisting of key education leaders in the state who serve as an advisory committee to the accountability unit. Other groups of department consultants, process specialists and subject area specialists work with the accountability unit to help local districts develop their plans, including providing assistance in curriculum decisions and student assessments.

New Jersey

New Jersey's school improvement efforts began with a school finance court mandate to the legislature to define and implement a "thorough and efficient" (T&E) education system. In defining this concept, the legislature included four factors: state goals for education, a T&E education planning process, state technical assistance and evaluation. Specific goals for student achievement in the basic skills were set and are monitored through annual tests. The T&E planning process requires schools and school districts to work through a seven-step process every five years, developing goals, setting student assessment objectives, finding out what students need, selecting appropriate programs, training people to carry them out and evaluating the results. By matching needs, programs and assessment results with the state-mandated standards, schools are able to identify problem areas and provide remediation. The state department of education, through 21 county offices, 4 education improvement centers and central staff, provides extensive technical assistance to schools and school districts in developing plans. The county offices annually evaluate the schools and school districts and monitor their progress throughout the year.

New Mexico

For the past five to six years, the department of education has made a concerted effort to review local programs in every district for compliance with state regulations. This effort involves monitoring, follow-up technical assistance and follow-up monitoring. Districts can request assistance in curriculum development. In 1977, a basic skills plan was implemented and a test is given in the

10th grade. It is not required for graduation — it is used for a proficiency endorsement on the diploma. In addition to these activities that focus on students and the instructional program, teacher candidates will be required to pass a basic skills and communications test for initial certification, beginning in 1983. College students also will be required to pass a written basic skills test before admission to teacher training programs.

New York

The New York State Education Department has a long history of direct involvement with its students and schools. Over the past few years the focus has been on programs that meet department objectives of 1) establishing standards, 2) monitoring student achievement and 3) improving school effectiveness. It now has three major programs that forge a stronger school improvement link between the department and local schools and school districts. The first is the Regents Competency Testing Program begun in 1978. Under this program, mandated tests establish minimum competency standards for high school graduation in reading, writing and mathematics, with checkpoints along the way in grades 3, 6, and 8 or 9. Any student who is identified at these checkpoints as potentially having difficulty in passing the Regents Competency Tests must be given remedial help. The second program, the Resource Allocation Plan, reorganized the department's staffing, planning and technical assistance structures to better identify which schools in the state need which resources and to coordinate the delivery of federal, state, local and regional resources. Schools with achievement trend data below state expectations may request assistance. Department staff members assigned to many schools give the building principals a direct link to all state education agency technical assistance resources. This enables administrators and teachers in individual schools to work directly and indirectly with education department personnel to plan, develop, implement and evaluate programs for the schools that will prepare students to meet the Regents Competency Testing Program standards.

The third program is the Secondary School Registration program that implements the regents' authority to set and enforce minimum standards for high schools. High schools in New York cannot issue diplomas unless registered, and junior and senior high schools are visited every five years to ensure compliance with regulations and to ensure that they are providing minimum basic skills instruction and courses with acceptable levels of pupil retention. If not, the department can refer schools to regional or

state resources and recommend changes in programs to bring them into compliance so that the schools may be registered.

North Carolina

North Carolina's support for school improvement from the department of public instruction is provided through teams of consultants from eight regional service centers, organized to aid local districts and schools. These centers are staffed with department specialists and consultants with expertise, for example, in staff development, child nutrition, exceptional children, curriculum development, vocational education and community/school relations. The centers hold workshops, help write grant proposals and help develop local district plans and budgets. A Principals' Institute, which conducts its training and technical assistance functions largely through the regional centers, focuses on principals' needs including time management, stress and performance appraisal. Most of the state education agency's services provided to local school districts are delivered through these centers — branches of the department of public instruction, not intermediate units.

The state also tests students as they move through school. In 1978, at the initiative of Governor James Hunt, it began to administer a competency test in grade 11; passing this test is required for high school graduation. For students who fail the test, a state compensatory education and remediation program was created. Investment in education improvement was a cornerstone of the governor's economic development plan, including the minimum competency test. He can now guarantee companies that all high school graduates will have competency in specific basic skills. In addition, the mission of the community college system has been focused on training in labor market skills needed by employers in high technology industries, which the governor is encouraging to move to the state. The overall program shows how a state education system and a school improvement program can be part of a broader political goal — in this case, statewide economic development.

North Carolina is seeking to make a quantum leap in its teacher preparation program through its Quality Assurance Program, which had its genesis in a joint resolution of the state board of education and the board of governors of the university system, with significant support and encouragement from the governor's office. Although this program has been under way a little more

than a year, indications are that significant success is already being attained in the planning process.

North Dakota

North Dakota has a two-pronged approach to school improvement: enhanced accreditation standards that encourage greater parent involvement and an instructional program designed to track individual student progress throughout his stay in the school system. The state has a school approval statute mandating that schools meet minimum standards. Revised accreditation standards are voluntary and provide opportunities for schools to concentrate on school improvement procedures. Additionally, schools may opt for a self-study and team visitation process, which requires the involvement of parents and the community in determining how effectively the school is conducting the education process.

The student-focused initiative derives from a new state department of education project called "Each Student Is Special," which is based on three premises: 1) each student is unique, 2) rural education has significant potential for the delivery of learning experiences and 3) rural parents should share in a partnership role in education decision making. The project will be piloted in the 1982-83 school year in a number of predominantly rural schools. The project will create a parent/faculty team for each student, establish learning objectives and evaluate the progress of the student throughout the instructional process. The state has designed documents and processes for implementing the project and will provide training to both faculty and parents.

Ohio

School improvement efforts in Ohio are in a seminal stage and now include a restatement of the mission of the public school system. Guided by a revised education philosophy of the state board of education, the department of education identified 13 priorities for improving education quality and is now in various standard-setting, developmental and planning stages. One of the activities taken on by the department is the development of guidelines to be used by local districts in developing a plan for competency testing of students. School districts are to have their plans in operation by 1984. The department will provide regional workshops to aid teachers and administrators in the development of their plans. Another department action is to provide leadership to school districts for improving curriculum that is consistent with

new elementary and secondary school standards. These new standards have been developed and recommended to the state board. Implementation steps will be developed and published for all school officials in 1983, along with a series of meetings to explain the new standards to school officials. Publications and regional meetings will be held for school personnel in developing a program that gives students "access to a curriculum which provides for a scope and sequence of learning experiences and is consistent with applicable standards and laws." New certification standards for administrators are to be recommended in 1982, and new standards for teachers are to be recommended by 1985. Staff development plans include a handbook for developing school inservice plans and local school districts will develop a comprehensive inservice plan by 1983. Other programs address pupil attendance, discipline, desegregation, vocational education, school/community relations, declining enrollments, school funding, disadvantaged youth, handicapped and gifted, and effective human relations. While these plans are not yet operational, they indicate some ambitious and comprehensive goals.

Oklahoma

For the past few years, education improvement has been a major legislative policy issue. In 1980, the legislature passed a comprehensive teacher education bill that addressed teacher preparation, teacher certification, teacher competency testing, staff development and establishment of the entry year assistance program for beginning teachers prior to certification. In 1981 the state passed a major school finance reform and in 1982 it significantly increased school funding, targeting the bulk of the increase to higher teacher salaries. In a further attempt to improve curriculum, the legislature appropriated additional funds for the state department of education to develop curriculum guides in all disciplines for all grade levels and to assist schools in curriculum planning and review. Education improvement continues to be a major issue, with strong legislative and gubernatorial support.

Oregon

Oregon's program of school improvement rests on state-required but locally developed student competency tests, an instructional program that must be linked to individual student needs, and the use of achievement-tests data to monitor student progress and revise instructional strategies. In 1980, the Oregon State Board of Education adopted revised education standards requiring that

instruction be based on student abilities and interests, with goal statements of expected achievement and the charting of student progress in meeting those goals. In addition, each district is required to develop indicators that will measure student progress, including reading, writing and mathematics. These actions reflect the approach in which the state sets down certain general requirements but allows the districts full authority over the design of the instruments and tools to comply with the state mandates.

Pennsylvania

The Pennsylvania school improvement program is a broad-based comprehensive program. The program requires the development of a long-range plan for school improvement as the first stage in the process. The plan is designed to cover a five-year period. It is structured around school practices in five major areas. These are education programs and services, district management, personnel development, community staff involvement and nondistrict support services. Districts are required to identify instructional goals with priority ranking. If they do not use the state's 12 quality goals directly, they must identify the relationship between the goals. The state's education quality assessment program is used as one of the bases for needs assessment. The department has organized a large percentage of its personnel data and technology resources as a department technical assistance system. This has been combined with technical assistance from intermediate units and a "pairing relationship" service process with institutions of higher education. Each district's long-range plan requires evaluation at two junctures — a midpoint progress report and an end-of-cycle evaluation report. The final report may be used by the district to apply for "Registration," a department process culminating in formal recognition of the district's efforts. This process assists the department in publicly recognizing that the major outcomes of school improvement — 1) increased growth in student achievement, 2) a systematic approach to district management and 3) effective use of community and nondistrict resources — have been accomplished.

The department also maintains a resource system to provide instructional and training materials, a personnel file, a data bank and descriptions of effective projects. The state funds regional teacher inservice councils to identify education needs and to furnish resources as needed. Executive academies, also funded by the state, provide inservice needs for administrators in basic skills improvement, problem solving and stress management.

Rhode Island

The Rhode Island approach to school improvement stresses local district planning, supported by technical assistance in specific areas from the state education department. The Local Planning and Assessment Process is the basic school improvement program. It is a long-range effort at school improvement that involves educators, students and the community in planning, implementing and evaluating education programs in the local district. Regulations require that each district: 1) establish an education philosophy and goals, 2) establish education priorities, 3) analyze and plan programs in priority goals areas and 4) implement and evaluate these programs. The department of education focuses its technical assistance efforts on capacity building by offering a test item bank, a state-developed model reading program, written guides and manuals, and other technical services. Through the statewide assessment program, results of student performance are used by local districts in helping to formulate the district plan.

South Carolina

South Carolina focuses its education improvement strategies on teacher and student testing, and administrator inservice training. Under the Educator Improvement Act passed in 1979, teacher candidates must pass the National Teacher Examination (NTE) as well as a state-developed criterion-referenced test in areas not covered by the NTE. New teachers are evaluated at least once during their first year of teaching before being issued a regular certificate. The South Carolina Administrators Leadership Academy offers training and assistance for administrators in three basic areas: management skill development, current issues seminars and problem solving. The Basic Skills Assessment Act provides for a 1st-grade readiness test for students entering school and statewide criterion-referenced testing in grades 2, 3, 6, 8 and 11 for mathematics and communications skills.

South Dakota

South Dakota has launched a series of new efforts. Combining technical assistance services from the curriculum and instruction staff and the special education staff, it has begun a new Local Field Site Program, based on the effective schools research of Ron Edmonds. It has started a series of curriculum development efforts delivered through intermediate units, developed new services and leadership development activities for teachers and administrators,

including 12 workshops each year and a mandate that teachers participate in at least two inservice education days each year. It has started a technology-in-education initiative that is focusing on the use of microcomputers. Further, local school planning has been required under the new block grant, Chapter II, requirements.

Tennessee

In November 1981, as part of a state department of education reorganization, nine district service centers were created and began to function as technical assistance teams providing services to local school districts. This reflected an effort to decentralize the state education agency and to bring resources closer to the district and school level. The centers have no monitoring or regulatory functions; three separate regional teams function in that capacity. The creation of these intermediate units occurred simultaneously with the development of a set of statewide school improvement strategies and requirements. First, all districts are required to develop annually a school improvement plan. These plans must include system efforts to improve instruction as they relate to curriculum, staff development and community/parent education and involvement. Second, in 1979 the legislature and state board of education mandated that teacher inservice education programs should be part of, and directly related to, the overall district plan. Third, Basic Skills First, a curriculum program identifying basic skills in reading and math for grades K-8 was developed by master classroom teachers and has been piloted in the 1981-82 school year and will be available to all schools in the following year.

A commissioner's discretionary fund has been made available to assist schools in curriculum improvement and instruction based on needs identified in the instructional improvement plan, inservice plan or local needs assessment. These grants may be used, for example, to acquire consultants to work with the local school in curriculum improvement activities, for assistance in implementing a school or classroom improvement model, for assistance in conducting staff development programs or for assistance in planning and evaluation of curriculum. A proposal to provide additional resources to school districts, the Incentive Funding Proposal, will be piloted in 10-12 districts in the 1982-83 school year. Incentive awards could be based on measured gains of student proficiency or percentage of students performing above a certain level and could be awarded to teachers, schools or school systems.

Teachers also now must pass the National Teacher's Examination to obtain certification.

Texas

In Texas the school improvement strategy focuses on the accreditation process. School district accreditation is established by law and districts are required to submit a five-year plan identifying their education needs and program priorities. Some standards and curriculum are required to meet accreditation standards. Each district that has grades K-12 must offer a well-balanced curriculum that includes English and other languages, mathematics, science, health, physical education, fine arts, social studies, economics, business and vocational education, and Texas and U.S. history. The Texas Education Agency monitors these efforts and offers technical assistance primarily through 20 education service centers. These centers aid the districts in meeting the accreditation requirements by teaching districts how to assess their programs and curriculum problems, and how to solve them. In addition, the centers provide a variety of other services on a decentralized basis. The Texas Education Agency also is developing a model basic skills improvement plan in an effort to provide a structure for districts with ineffective schools.

In addition to these initiatives, the legislature has been involved in school improvement initiatives by requiring new tests of teachers for initial certification, and revising the school finance formulas.

Utah

The Utah school improvement initiative has a curriculum focus. It is based on the State Curriculum Framework, a model for curriculum development that grew out of a comprehensive study conducted in the late 1960s involving educators, students and citizens in the identification of goals for education. The model outlines the procedure for using the content of each subject area as a vehicle for acquiring life-coping skills, rather than emphasizing the content knowledge in specific subject areas as an end in itself. Department of education curriculum specialists work with local districts to help them develop a course of study, objectives and guidelines, inservice activities and assessment strategies. Local districts also are required to develop or select a student competency test and set cut-off scores. The tests are used as a high school graduation requirement and for identifying students needing remediation. Grade levels tested are determined by local districts.

Vermont

During the 1982 state legislative session, a new state aid to education formula was passed which involved an increase over 1981 of $22.4 million for local school districts. With a new commissioner of education appointed in 1982, several new initiatives in regard to school improvement have been introduced including new certification regulations for elementary and secondary teachers, new special education rules focusing on eligibility, a process of assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of Vermont public schools with emphasis on a full review of vocational education, and a new approach to teacher inservice training. An ongoing program in student basic competency testing in the local schools is now in its fifth year.

For several years the Resource Agent Program has been operating as a way to disseminate successful education practices. Administered through the department of education and supported by federal program funds, teachers and administrators who have developed a special activity, program, method or skill that has been successfully tested, are given special workshop training, then become available to offer support, in the form of school site visits and workshops, to schools that are in the process of developing an idea into an effective education practice.

Virginia

Virginia's school improvement efforts have their basis in a legislative mandate called the Standards of Quality, which are revised every two years by the general assembly. The Standards of Quality prescribe skill objectives and curriculum guides for districts. Although the state provides technical assistance to local education agencies in the development of local standards, the local agencies must bear the cost. Schools are monitored every three years for compliance with the state-mandated standards of quality: basic skills, career preparation, special education, gifted and talented, alternative education, responsible student conduct, personnel, staff preparation and development, testing and measurement, accreditation and school evaluation, planning and public involvement, and policy manuals. In addition, the state school funding formula is tied directly to these standards; the formula includes a specific element for each standard.

Statewide minimum competency tests in reading and mathematics also are required for high school graduation.

Washington

The Basic Education Act of 1977, which was the programmatic complement to the 1977 school finance reform bill, requires all local school districts to develop curriculum options and student assessment procedures and specifies programmatic requirements districts must meet as a condition to receive state funds. A student learning objectives law specifies that districts must establish student learning objectives in all subject areas in every grade, and that achievement assessments must be made annually. The state monitors 10 percent of the schools each year for compliance. The process of curriculum development involves parent, teacher and administrator committees in an effort to encourage parental participation and support of student academic efforts. Statewide workshops for parents and administrators provide strategies for helping parents participate in their child's academic experience.

The department of public instruction conducted an extensive statewide survey in late 1980 in an attempt to pinpoint citizen and educator concerns about education. Three high priority areas for 1981-82 were identified — oral and written communication, student motivation and discipline, and computer technology. A task force in each area has been formed to develop programs and suggest alternative state policies in the three priority areas and should be available for field dissemination in the 1982-83 school year.

West Virginia

Legislation was passed in 1981 requiring the West Virginia Department of Education to develop minimum standards for quality education and requiring each school district to develop an annual plan for school improvement that addresses locally identified needs. The department will review plans annually. Every fourth year, an on-site review will be conducted to verify compliance with the standards and to review the district's school improvement plan. This review will determine the district status for each county — full approval, substantial full approval, probation, nonapproval. Technical assistance will be provided for remediation if necessary. Each district must also set aside three noninstructional days each school year for continuing education activities. Each district must establish a continuing education council to assess needs and to write a district plan that will be reviewed by the department of education. Given the recent state supreme court decision overturning the school finance system, including a detailed court definition of a "thorough and efficient"

education system, much more activity in defining the state's education program and implementing effective school plans are likely in the next few years.

In the area of curriculum, West Virginia has initiated or has completed: specification of learning outcomes and learning objectives for all content areas in early childhood, middle childhood and adolescent education; development, implementation and evaluation of competency-based staff development packages in reading; replication and evaluation of the Stallings classroom management model; replication, implementation and evaluation of teacher expectations student achievement project (TESA); design, development, implementation and evaluation of a computer-assisted mathematics laboratory; design, development, implementation and evaluation of a Chicago mastery learning project in reading; design and implementation of systematic model for staff development packages in curriculum development; design of competency-based staff development package for the implementation of new curriculum in the content areas; initiation of the development of an education program development model that brings together special and regular educators for the benefit of exceptional children; design and implementation of a statewide computerized textbook adoption and use reporting system; implementation of a supervised entry level guidance program (fifth year on-site supervision); development of objective-referenced tests based on reading learning outcomes and learning objectives; and implementation of a statewide model for competency-based staff development.

The West Virginia Board of Education adopted a policy in April 1982 that defines four components of teacher education programs. These components are: basic skills, general studies, content specialization and professional education. The performance of teacher education students in basic skills and general studies may be assessed by techniques developed by each institution. Performance in content specializations and general education will be assessed by statewide standardized performance instruments. All testing must occur within approved teacher education programs and data are to be used for diagnostic and prescriptive purposes.

Wisconsin

Wisconsin's education improvement effort has centered on a new minimum competency test. In 1982, the legislature passed a permissive minimum competency testing law. Local districts are encouraged to develop and administer such a test. The role of the

state department of education is to have available a bank of test items that districts can use in the development of these tests. Schools also can develop their own items, or they can buy commercially developed tests. The department also reviews the tests given by districts electing to participate and reimburses the district for a portion of the cost of the tests.

Wyoming

Wyoming concentrates on staff development as its primary school improvement initiative and holds an administrator workshop every summer. In addition, during the school year it uses a "broker system" of state education agency consultants who visit local superintendents every six weeks in an effort to improve communication between the department and local school districts, and to stimulate school improvement. The superintendents can recommend visits to and consultations with local school principals and teachers.